

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please amend the specification as follows.

Please amend the abstract as show below:

**Abstract**

The present ~~disclosure invention~~ provides methods for modulating the cholesterol level of a cell.  
In some aspects, methods relate to contacting a cell with one or more cholesterol-modulating  
compounds, thereby increasing or decreasing the cholesterol level of the cell.~~a screening method~~  
~~for identifying test agents that modulate cell membrane cholesterol activity. The modulating~~  
~~activity of the test agents may be measured using lytic compounds, which cause cell lysis or~~  
~~increases in cell permeability in response to cell membrane cholesterol levels. The invention~~  
~~further provides therapeutic agents that are identified using the screening method. The~~  
~~therapeutic agents either increase or decrease the cell membrane cholesterol activity, cholesterol~~  
~~concentration and/or both in vivo and/or in vitro.~~